

REMARKS

This Amendment is attended to address the issues raised in the outstanding final Office Action. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the following discussion.

By this Amendment, Claim 13 has been amended to correct a typographical error, and new dependent Claim 33 has been added. Accordingly, Claims 13-33 are now pending for consideration, with Claims 13 and 26 being independent.

In the outstanding final Office Action, all claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Arvidsson (U.S. Patent No. 5,035,446). However, it is not apparent to Applicant how the Examiner views Arvidsson as meeting the claim limitations at issue. The final Office Action discusses the reference generally, but does not apply the reference disclosure to the actual limitations of the claims. Nevertheless, in an effort to advance the prosecution, Applicant offers the following comments to further clarify the deficiencies of Arvidsson with respect to the claimed invention.

In accordance with Applicant's invention as set forth in Claim 13, an electrically actuated telescopic steering apparatus comprises an outer steering column member, an inner steering column member telescopically received in the outer steering column member, and an electric actuator having an extendable and retractable drive rod coupled to the inner steering column member to effect telescopic adjustment of the inner steering column member within the outer steering column member. The drive rod of the actuator is coupled to the inner steering column member by a bracket structure which is attached to the inner steering column member and which projects through an opening in a side wall of the outer steering column member, the opening extending along an axial direction of the outer steering column member to accommodate movement of the bracket structure therein during the telescopic adjustment of the inner steering column member.

Regarding Arvidsson, it is initially observed that the reference lacks an outer steering column member and an inner steering column member telescopically received in the outer steering column member. Rather, Arvidsson teaches lower and upper column tubes 4 and 10 which are pivotally, but not telescopically, connected at 11. The lower tube instead slides within a supporting bracket

structure 2 supported beneath a vehicle instrument panel. Further, Arvidsson shows an actuator 20 for telescopic movement which is attached to the bracket structure 2 and has an operating rod 23 connected to a lug 25 attached to the lower tube member 4. By contrast, Claim 13 recites a telescopic movement actuator having a drive rod coupled to the inner telescopic steering column member by a bracket structure which is attached to the inner telescopic steering column member and which projects through an opening in a sidewall of the outer telescopic steering column member. Arvidsson's bracket structure 24 evidently is not coupled to an inner telescopic steering column member. Rather, it is attached to the outer surface of a lower of the two steering column members 4 and 10, which do not telescope with respect to each other.

Arvidsson thus clearly fails to anticipate the structure set forth in Claim 13. Nor would Arvidsson have rendered such structure obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection on Arvidsson be withdrawn with respect to Claim 13 and its dependents. Applicant further requests that if the Examiner should continue to assert the Arvidsson reference with respect to Claim 13

and its dependents, a detailed explanation be provided as to how the Arvidsson reference is deemed to meet the limitations of Claim 13, and the limitations of its dependents which clearly distinguish ever further from the reference.

Turning now to Claim 26, Applicant's invention provides an electrically actuated tiltable steering apparatus, comprising a steering shaft, and a steering column having the steering shaft rotatably supported therein. The steering shaft has a front end connected to a universal joint, and the steering column has a front end rockably supported to a vehicle body, such that the steering column and the steering shaft are integrally tiltable. The apparatus further includes a tilt rocking member rockably supported to the vehicle body and having a slide frame portion formed therein. A slide portion projects from the steering column and is slidably received in the slide frame portion. Further, an electric actuator is pivotally coupled to one of the vehicle body and the steering column, and has a drive rod which is pivotally connected to the tilt rocking member. The drive rod is extendable and retractable to effect rocking movement of the tilt rocking member and thereby

tilt the steering column and the steering shaft, with the slide portion sliding along the slide frame portion.

As to Arvidsson, it is apparent that the lower tube member 4 does not have its front end rockably supported to a vehicle body. Rather, the front end of lower tube 4 is axially slidably received within the mounting bracket structure 2. Furthermore, Arvidsson's tilt movement actuator 26 has its operating rod 27 pivotally coupled to a lug 29 of the upper tube member 10. There is no structure corresponding to the claimed tilt rocking member, having a slide frame portion formed therein, and the claimed slide portion projecting from the steering column and slidably received in the slide frame portion such that the slide portion slides along the slide frame portion when the steering column and steering shaft are tilted.

Accordingly, Arvidsson neither anticipates, nor renders obvious, the structure set forth in Applicant's Claim 26. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the outstanding rejection also be withdrawn as to Claim 26 and its dependents. Applicant further requests that should the Examiner continue to assert Arvidsson against those claims, a detailed explanation be provided as to how Arvidsson is deemed to meet each of the limitations of Claim 26, as well

as those of its dependents which evidently distinguish even further from the reference.

Newly presented Claim 33 recites an apparatus, dependent from Claim 13, wherein the bracket structure coupling the telescopic movement drive rod actuator to the inner steering column member is attached to an interior portion of the inner steering column member. Clearly, Arvidsson's lug 25 fails to meet the foregoing limitation of Claim 33.

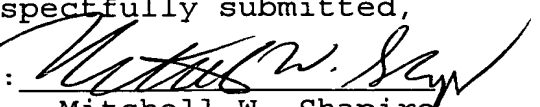
For the reasons set forth in the preceding remarks, it is respectfully requested that this application now be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

October 20, 2006

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the date shown below.

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